Calliope

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calliope *kal<e>i:opi. U.S. (Gr. Kallioph)*

(beautiful-voiced), the ninth of the Muses,
presiding over eloquence and heroic poetry.

1. An instrument consisting of a series of
steam-whistles toned to produce musical notes,
played by a keyboard like that of an organ;
Oxford English Dictionary

2. attrib. calliope hummingbird,
a hummingbird, *Selasphorus calliope,* of the
Western United States and Mexico. It is the smallest
long-distance avian migrant in the world.
Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Calliope 2014 Third Prize - Fiction

The Loudmouth

Robert C. Trexler

"It's me," Elena heard the man say. He was seated alone at a table between two others.

"I just thought I'd see if you were awake," he continued.

The man, using a cellphone, was dressed casually and apparently in no particular hurry. Like the others in the coffee shop, he spoke louder than Elena thought necessary…so loud she sometimes was distracted from tending to the needs of the customers.

"Ha, ha," the man laughed, "You should get dressed. Are you wearing those little pink PJs?"

Elena imagined a pert young woman in dainty pajamas on the other end of the call, sleepily lounging on her bed.

"Shit, Tony, don't give me that crap," the man said angrily.

Tony? Or maybe Toni, she thought.

"Espresso, black," she said to a customer who had ordered it.

"Who's this?" the man shouted.

A woman seated next to him turned her head to stare.

"Bill? Put Tony back on the line," he said. "To hell with the shower!"

Elena decided that Toni was a woman who now was taking a shower while her husband, lover, son, father, landlord…was talking to the man.

"Bill... Bill… don't hang up on me… Bill?" The man grimaced at the phone and pushed buttons to call a number.

Elena watched him out of the corner of her eye.

He stared across the room at the menu posted above her workstation. In a minute, he removed the phone from his ear, closed the case, and left the store.

§

Elena had been working in the shop for about six months. She was accustomed to the clientele. There were many regular

customers who almost always ordered the same thing, and then there was the occasional, stranger customer. She learned early on not to presume the routine order and go one step beyond her cheery greeting by actually providing it. She always waited for them to say the words. Still, although she recognized her customers, she didn't know names and could only guess at their occupations or social connections.

For the past several weeks she had become aware of an older man who, like many other customers, spent more time at a table than consuming his purchase would require. Customers used the Wi-Fi connection that the shop provided—working, watching streaming movies or news programs, or playing games on their computers. They commonly used their cellphones. Often, several customers would be talking at the same time, contributing to the babble of the place. Elena wondered why people seemed always to speak more loudly into their cellphones than if they were sitting next to a live person. In fact, she had begun to supply the unheard half of conversations.

The next day, around noon, the man was back.

"Large black coffee," he ordered

'

"To go?"

"No," he said.

Elena saw that he was wearing the clothes he wore yesterday. She drew the coffee, and gave him change. He took it to an empty table and sat, carefully sipping, lest the coffee burn his throat. Satisfied with the temperature, he took a swallow and pushed the cup away from him. He took out his cellphone and punched in a number.

"I was wondering if you still had that Caddy for sale," he said loudly.

Elena thought it unlikely the man would buy a Cadillac automobile. *Even used ones cost more than that man made in a year,* she thought.

"I talked to you last week... I called at night, remember… You got pissed because it was so late... yeah, that's me." The man continued, his voice rising in pitch and volume.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah… so how much? You got to be kidding… it's four years old… take it or leave it?"

"I'll leave it." He ended the conversation.

Sitting next to him were a young man and a woman.

"How much did he want," the young man asked.

The man moved his chair closer to the couple.

"For the Caddy?"

"Yeah, I couldn't help overhearing you."

"Twelve big ones."

"What year?"

"It's four years old."

The young man shook his head. "Well a lot depends on the condition and the model, right?" he said.

"You sell them?" the man asked.

"No, I fix them."

"Cadillacs?"

"Don't matter the make," the young man said, taking a pack of cigarettes out of his shirt pocket.

"Let's go outside," his girlfriend said, "Can't smoke here."

They went outdoors to sit at a table.

"Hey, wait," said the man who took his coffee and followed them.

Elena got busy with the lunch crowd.

§

Shortly before noon the following day, the "Loudmouth," as Elena dubbed him, was back, asking for a cup of coffee. He selected a table that was between two others that were in use. Soon, he placed a call.

"Hey Gus, it's me… yeah," he drank some coffee while holding the phone to his ear.

"Yeah, I know. Anyway, what's it look like at Hialeah?"

Elena perked up at the name of the racetrack. Was he talking to a bookie? She noticed that the bald man seated to his left stopped reading his paper to look at the man on his cellphone.

"That old nag still working?" the Loudmouth said.

Elena had grown up in south Florida and was aware of the history of Hialeah Race Track. She knew it no longer ran thoroughbred horse races, but had turned to racing quarter horses. Elena wondered what the call was about.

"OK, ok… what about Santa Anita?" he asked

He was talking about horse racing, Elena concluded.

"Yeah, I picked Einstein a couple of years ago. That Brazilian nag did all right by me," he laughed loudly.

"You bet on Einstein to win?" asked the bald man.

The Loudmouth looked at the man and nodded. "That was my best year," he said into the phone.

Elena was sure he was talking to a bookie.

"Ok, ok, if you got to go… I'll call later," he said and hung up.

"What year was that?" asked the bald man.

"Yeah," the Loudmouth said, "That was in 2009 at Santa Anita. You follow the races?"

"Yeah, I used to," the bald man said. "But not much anymore." He moved his chair closer to the other man.

Elena thought that the Loudmouth had made a new friend. She noticed that people who sat near him seemed to be drawn into his conversations. Of course, it was hard to ignore what he said. Still, his conversations with the customers in the store had become more involved, and, she noticed, he conducted them more quietly.

§

A series of strong thunderstorms had been lashing the neighborhood for several days. The Loudmouth continued to drop in for his coffee and telephone calls. Although the storm had kept some customers away this day, the Loudmouth had found people who seemed to be interested in what he was saying.

"Gaugin?" he said, "He couldn't make it at home… had to go to some Pacific islands and paint the natives… Yeah, I know his paintings cost a lot now… if you could find one for sale."

Art? He's talking about art! Elena decided.

A series of bright flashes and loud thunder made everyone

stop talking and look out the windows at flailing tree limbs and shrouds of rain splashing through the parking lot. Customers with laptop computers closed the covers. Almost everyone using a cell-phone put theirs away. The Wi-Fi service had been interrupted by something.

Maybe lightning hit a cell tower, Elena thought.

"… yeah, well a lot of Impressionist painters didn't make it at all," the man continued to talk.

"Monet and those guys…" he laughed, "were exceptions."

The Loudmouth continued to talk into his phone, enjoying the stares of the other customers. Elena wondered what kind of special connection made it possible for him to continue his conversation when no one else could.

Second Prize

Boots

drawing

Robabeh Riasati

Calliope 2014 First Prize - Creative Nonfiction

Lesson Learned

Luis Angel Caycho

Everything was normal in Surco, "el barrio," where I lived as a child. It was formed by 27 square-shaped lots, each one surrounded by about 30 houses. Each lot was named by a letter in alphabetical order from A to Z. My lot, or "parqueo," was K, and my neighbors and I thought it was the best one. Every day after school we used to stay late playing soccer around our homes; we didn't have soccer fields so we used the lot where our parents parked their cars (or at least where they were *supposed* to park them because most of them didn't own one). We used two small rocks on each side of the lot as goals and a nice, brand new, FIFA-approved soccer ball that was our treasure.

One day our routine was suddenly interrupted when boys from the J lot came to challenge us in a soccer game. We couldn't just say no. It wasn't right. When kids from another "parqueo" came and challenged you in anything, you couldn't turn them down. So we had to follow that street commandment and play against them, even though they were older and better soccer players than us.

"Come on fools, let's bet some money here, how much you all got?" the boy who seemed to be their leader asked. We stared at each other for a couple of seconds. Nobody articulated a word, but I could tell nobody had money just by looking at all the hesitant faces.

"Are you telling me that you all together don't even have a single coin?" he asked sarcastically. I wondered if he also could see that we were broke just by observing our faces. We were poor and he knew that, which is why I suspected he was up to something else. It didn't take much time to find out what he really wanted.

"Ok, since you all don't have any money, let's bet the only thing that is worth something in your hood," he said while staring anxiously at our ball. With a confident smile he affirmed, "Let's bet your ball against this dog that we just found." I was surprised. I hadn't noticed the skinny dog that was behind them. It looked to

me more of a cat than a dog. Its ears were falling and his tongue reached almost to the ground since he apparently was hungry and very thirsty.

"Are you crazy man? That dog is almost dead!" one of my friends shouted while everyone else started laughing; everyone but me. Something inside me was telling me to help the dog. "Ok, you got yourselves a bet," I yelled, trying to avoid the stunned looks of my friends. "Look, I know we can win this, please trust me on this one," I replied almost begging them. At first they were angry and hopeless at the same time, but then we started to gain courage for the big encounter.

We played like warriors, and it wasn't only for our nice soccer ball or that dying dog. We were playing for our honor. After two hours of kicking the ball and several fouls against us, we did win the game. Nobody could believe it. Once we scored the final goal, the one that gave us the victory, we started jumping, laughing, and hugging each other. It was a glorious moment. But for the J boys this was more than humiliating. One of them took our ball and kicked it away toward the main avenue. We started fighting and complaining about it when we realized that the dog had run straight after the ball. It was like those slow motion scenes in the movies or those nightmares when you can't move. All I did was cover my eyes and wait until it was over. The last thing I heard was the sharp sound of a stopping car and a big thump after it. The dog had been hit by a car. We all ran closer to see. The dog was not moving.

"Now it's really dead," shouted the J boys while evilly laughing and fleeing with our ball from the scene. And there we were, surrounding a dead dog in the middle of the street. We won the game, but we lost our ball and the dog. We went in a couple of seconds from complete happiness to total emptiness. We learned a hard lesson in the school of life: in a poor neighborhood like the one we were living in, happy endings usually don't exist, and if they do, they last just for a brief moment, until the cruel reality slaps you in the face one more time, and again, and again.

The Buck

Katherine Herbst

Christian heaved a sigh as his body fell into the old sofa. It sighed back at him, reluctantly bearing his weight. Inside the house it was dark, but he didn't bother opening a curtain or flipping any lights. Instead, he grabbed the remote and flipped through the basic cable until the Georgia Bulldogs were playing on the screen. He was half watching when his mother stumbled in, looking exhausted. He glanced over at her.

"How was work?" he asked rhetorically. She grunted her response and dragged herself into the kitchen, turning on the stove.

"Ain't ya goin' out with that Carolina girl tonight?" she asked as she pulled a box of mac out of the cupboard.

"Her name is Caroline, and it ain't your business anyway," he replied. She mumbled something, but he couldn't hear her over the sound of fans cheering through the television set. He adjusted his position on the couch and continued to watch the game, tuning out anything she might have decided to say after that point. The still-young woman felt her heart grow heavy for her son every time he made it clear that no one had brought him up properly.

Their life had fallen into this routine since the day that Christian's father walked out the door. Neither of his parents had ever thought that they would be spending the rest of their days in Ellijay. They'd both had dreams far bigger than those North Georgia hills, but life had gotten in the way, as it so often does. Christian was born three months after their high school graduation. Ten years after that, his father packed that old tattered suitcase and stuck his thumb out on the highway. No one had heard from him since.

When the game was about done, a knock came at the front door of the singlewide. Christian swung the hollow door open as loudly as he could without breaking it. His best friend Luke was leaning on the doorframe, waving his keys in Christian's face. A smile actually crossed Christian's face as he snatched the keys away.

He turned halfway back into the house, calling to his mother in the nearby kitchen. “I’m goin’ out now, momma. Don’t wait up.”

“Hold on one second now,” she said, coming to the doorway and giving him a kiss. She stood there a moment, and then gave him the best advice she could think right then. “Don’t forget to look at the leaves while the sun’s still up, son. Storm’s gonna blow ‘em all away tonight, and when you’re old like me, you’re gonna wonder why you never took the time to look at ‘em.”

Christian glanced at Luke, who was stifling a laugh. “Thanks, momma,” Christian said over a chuckle. Then, he shut the door behind him, and the boys were gone.

“Truck’s full-a gas, and I left you somethin’ in the bed,” Luke told Christian while they were walking toward the rusty, black pickup. Christian nodded, thumping his friend on the back.

“You’re the best, ya know that?” he said casually.

“Obviously not, else I’d be the one takin’ Caroline Carter out tonight,” Luke reasoned. It drew a laugh from Christian as he jumped into the driver’s seat of the truck. He gave Luke a nod, then shut the door and started up the engine.

“Just don’t go wreckin’ it, ya hear?” Christian heard his friend holler over the engine. He drove away with the radio turned up real loud, speeding over to pick up his girl.

“You know that old haunted barn up by Blue Ridge?” he asked her. She nodded eagerly. “Well Luke’s momma made us some-a that famous chili, so we just gonna sit up out there and have us a picnic,” he said, driving fast through the mountain roads.

She beamed, leaning over and giving him a kiss on the cheek. “You’re perfect, Christian,” she whispered. He smirked.

When they made it to the barn, he pulled everything that Luke had left out from the truck bed, carrying it behind Caroline up to the barn loft and unpacking it for the girl. It didn’t take him long to find the ‘shine that his friend had been clever enough to sneak into the basket. That made Christian smirk, and he held it up to his date.

She beamed at all of it, sitting on the ground next to him and stroking his leg. “Thank you, Christian,” she said quietly. He

kissed her, and then began to get her a bowl of warm chili from the thermos. The night progressed at a rapid-fire pace, and before he knew it, the jar of ‘shine was half empty and the moon was high. Christian lay back on a pile of hay, watching a drunken Caroline struggle to redress.

“I got this,” he said, reaching out and clasping her bra back together. “How you so drunk?” he asked her. She swayed a little in response.

“Guess I'm a lightweight,” she hiccuped. He laughed, stroking her soft back.

“Guess so,” he muttered, leaning back when he finished.

“Better question is, how you not drunk?” she asked after a lull. She had finally managed to get her shirt back on and was now lying pressed against his chest. He shrugged.

“Who said I wasn't?” he retorted. She thought about this.

“Then who's gonna drive us home?” she asked, suddenly concerned. He petted her copper hair soothingly.

“Don't worry, baby,” he hummed, “I'm just messin' with you. I'm-a be just fine drivin'. We’ll even wait a little while if it'll make ya feel better.”

She nodded, and he wrapped his arms around her body. An hour passed before either of them moved from that spot; Caroline spent a good chunk of that time falling asleep in Christian's arms. The storm eventually did roll in, though, and rain began to leak through the cracks in the barn.

“Come on, baby, we gotta get back. It’s starting to storm,” he whispered. She grumbled, but sat up, stretching before climbing down from the barn loft. Without hesitation, they hopped into the truck and headed back toward home.

It was too late before Christian realized he'd exceeded a hundred miles an hour. There was no way he could have seen the buck through the rain, and certainly no way it could have seen him. Regardless of how fast he was going, the entire event seemed to move in slow motion inside Christian's head. He slammed his brakes, but the deer moved toward them anyway. How was that possible? It was standing still in the road. He shook his head, closing his eyes. When he opened them again, the deer was about to

collide. He braced for impact, throwing his arm protectively over Caroline's chest. His airbag deployed immediately, knocking the wind out of him. Hers never did.

It seemed like he had just hung up his cell phone when, quite suddenly, there were flashlights in his eyes and sirens wailing around him. Glances to his right revealed the mangled body of the innocent beast. *Have you had anything to drink? Where were you going? Where were you coming from? How fast do you think you were driving?* Every question came at once from everywhere and nowhere. He couldn't see what was in front of him. All he saw was the deer, the lights, Caroline's body pressing against his arm. They all played like a reel in front of his face, covering the reality that was unraveling in front of him.

He saw the ambulance doors open and knew that Caroline was being pulled inside. He stood, moving around the police officer and toward the ambulance. “Son, I am speaking to you. Stay right here.” Christian ignored the man. “Son, you cannot – boy!” Christian could hardly hear him. He didn't matter; Christian had to know that Caroline was alright. She was lifted into the vehicle just as he reached it, and he didn't get any sight of her face. Her body was covered. He looked desperately at the EMT but got no response. The men jumped inside, and the ambulance drove away.

Then, the officer was behind him, a heavy hand on his shoulder. “Son, I'm going to administer a breathalyzer test. Do you consent to this?” Christian turned toward the man, nodding. Might as well get it over with. The officer shook his head at the result, unsurprised. “You have a blood-alcohol level of point one-four. Do you understand what this means?”

Christian looked away from the officer as if he didn’t hear the question. His eyes moved up to the trees that were still shaking from the rain. The wind had blown all of the leaves from their branches, and they were now barren. He realized then that he'd forgotten to slow down and look at them for his momma.

Indocumentado

Sayda Sarahi Garcia Pineda

Intrepido caminante rompes sin permiso por la necesidad,
vez una luz, pero pareces nunca alcanzar.
Tu entorno es vasto e inmenso,
donde la tierra y el cielo se juntan sin final.

El hambre no se siente, el sueno se va.
Caminar en el desierto es doblemente fatigoso.
Espinas se incustran en tu piel,
alambres te cortan en tu paso.
Pero no sientes, las ganas de llegar te han anesteciado
las heridas duelen menos que volver atras.

Tus pies se cansan…
Dios te da las fuerzas para continuar.
Llegas al rio, no sabes nadar…
Tienes suerte, te empinas y el agua llega hasta tu cuello.
El lodo en tus pies no se queda en tu piel, se infiltra hasta tocar tu dignidad.
Tratas de no pensar, tu unica meta es llegar.

Un rio y una barda no te pararon,
finalmente vez una bandera de otro color.
Tu jornada ha terminado,
lo lograstes estas aqui…
valio la pena,
pues ellos esperaban por ti.

Translation

Undocumented

Sayda Sarahi Garcia Pineda (K.V. White, faculty mentor)

Intrepid walker; you cross without permission by necessity.
You see a light, but it seems like you will never reach it.
Your surroundings are vast and immense,
where the earth and sky meet without end.

You do not feel hunger, and you are unable to sleep.
Walking in the desert is particularly exhausting.
Thorns dig deep into your skin;
wires cut you in your path.
But you do not feel; the desire to get there has numbed you to the pain.
You know that your wounds are going to hurt less than going back.

Your feet get tired;
but God gives you the strength to go on.
You get to the River, but you can't swim.
You're lucky; the water only reaches up to your neck.
Yet the mud on your feet does not stay on your skin;
it seeps up to touch your dignity.
You try not to think; your only goal is to cross.

Neither a river or a fence has stopped you
and you finally see a flag of another color.
Your journey is over.
You made it, and you are here.
It was worth it
because they were waiting for you.

Calliope 2014 Second Prize - ESL

Pokémon: When Imagination Can Create a Real Magic

Nhien Vu An Tran

People are grateful to many people and things in their lives such as their parents, teachers, or fortune. No matter what things they are thankful for, the feelings of appreciation may be very similar. I am thankful for a very special thing, Pokémon. It is a fictional world where there are countless magical creatures (which are also called pokémons) living with humans. Unreal as it is, *Pokémon* has turned what I have into enough and more.

I am grateful to *Pokémon* because it plays a special role in my life. I played *Pokémon* games and watched *Pokémon* cartoons since I was a little child, and I was quickly attracted to them. Besides, my classmates in elementary school also liked *Pokémon* cartoons. We usually chatted about *Pokémon* stories at break time. My childhood was more joyful and colorful thanks to those stories. When I grew up, I still loved watching *Pokémon* cartoons, reading *Pokémon* stories, and playing *Pokémon* games while my friends stopped doing such things because they thought that *Pokémon* products were for children. They even teased me but I wasn't concerned. People don't need any reason to love something so I don't need any reason to stop my habits. I still love *Pokémon* now. They remind me of my naïve childhood and how mature I became. I realize that *Pokémon* stories are not only appropriate for the childish "me" but also indispensable to my spiritual life.

Pokémon stories have changed my point of view in a positive way. Each story taught me a lesson that I could never learn in school. I knew how important friendships are to people when I saw the protagonist overcome tough challenges in his adventure with his friends always standing by him. I recognized that the power of faith and honesty can make everyone get closer to each other when I saw the pokémons and humans sacrifice themselves for others' lives, or the protagonist use his pure heart to communicate with other people and pokémons. Moreover, *Pokémon*

stories taught me that the best way to make my dream come true is to never give up on it. Although all the stories are imaginary, my dream, which is to become a doctor, is reasonable. Therefore, I still believe in it. *Pokémon* stories do not lure me to a fictional world. On the contrary, they make me believe more in my real life.

Since *Pokémon* is one of the most special products ever created, it has also made my life unique and meaningful. I am an adult now. Whenever I have a problem with my studies or relationships, I just go to my room and watch a *Pokémon* episode or play a *Pokémon* game. I don't feel embarrassed by my habit. In contrast, I am proud of it because it helps me refresh my mind and stay out of many temptations or bad habits in the adult world such as suspicions, plots, or anger. Every kind of Pokémon has its own meaning. Therefore, I usually draw *Pokémon* pictures and give them to my friends, my teachers, or someone I feel interested in to let them know what I am thinking of and how I respect them. Even though I am not a good drawer, I always feel that each picture I give away is like a bridge that connects my soul to others. Thanks to the presence of *Pokémon*, I can communicate with people in my own way, not in a cloned way.

If someone tells me that I am so childish for loving *Pokémon*, I will smile and feel pity for them because they gave up on their youth while I'm still enjoying it. It's been twelve years since I watched my first *Pokémon* episode. The fact is that I am growing up day by day, but *Pokémon* stories still remain unchanged, faithful, and educative. As long as such stories still exist, I can assume that my life will be clean and cheerful just like *Pokémon.*

Calliope 2014 Second Prize - Poetry

Metempsychosis

Jessica Meyers

She sits in her wheelchair gazing out the window
She has the ability to move, but not the will.
Still, she sits and whispers.
She's been in this asylum for ages. A person nobody knows.
She was forced into thralldom by this existence while she witnessed him exit his.

Abyss,
Filled with chaos at first, but now this chasm is filled with only emptiness
Still, she sits and whispers.

She's enclosed by this flesh, but liberated in rumination.
She gets lost in reverie enthralled by her memories,
Or maybe they are lives in other dimensions.
Ascensions, the quintessence of her infinite *Saṃsāra*
Still, she sits and whispers.

She is in these places more than in this particular reality, and
She knows this institution is her corporeal existence
Because she can sense it when she surrenders to it.
Still, she sits and whispers.

She dreams in her memories that she is back at the asylum, and
She knows it's not a dream at all, but it is her reality.
Still, she sits and whispers.

All is lost and this place appears so gray.
A dwelling without him holds no sanctuary.
Still, she sits and whispers.

She refuses to reside here. Instead she drifts from her reality
To a place where she is with him everlastingly.

He is perpetual; it's consistently him, never another.
The souls are the same,
But the gender
The guise
The species!
It's those characteristics that change.
Still, she sits and whispers.

They are companions, lovers or enemies.
They may not find each other during every lifetime, and
They may have other companions, lovers or enemies, but…

We only have one true soul mate,
Each other.
Still, I sit and whisper.

I whisper the last words I said to you
The only ones that have escaped these lips
Since I witnessed jīva ātmā--your beautiful soul--
Slowly seeping out of your temporal embodiment
Still, I sit and whisper.

I whisper these esoteric words,
These words which allow me to travel to you time and time again.
"Our hearts, our souls, they are intertwined in our forever."
Still, I sit and whisper….

Ashne

Anjelika Gascon

The boy with an ascot hat—
sat in front of a Tibetan wheel
and strung the strings—
of his goat skinned doshpuluur
a group—
of rounded throat singers
ahhhwoohhhahhwohhh—
emptied minds and spirited hearts
voices—so lovely
as long—as you keep
both ears searching
you'll find peace—
in the echoes of every hollow strum

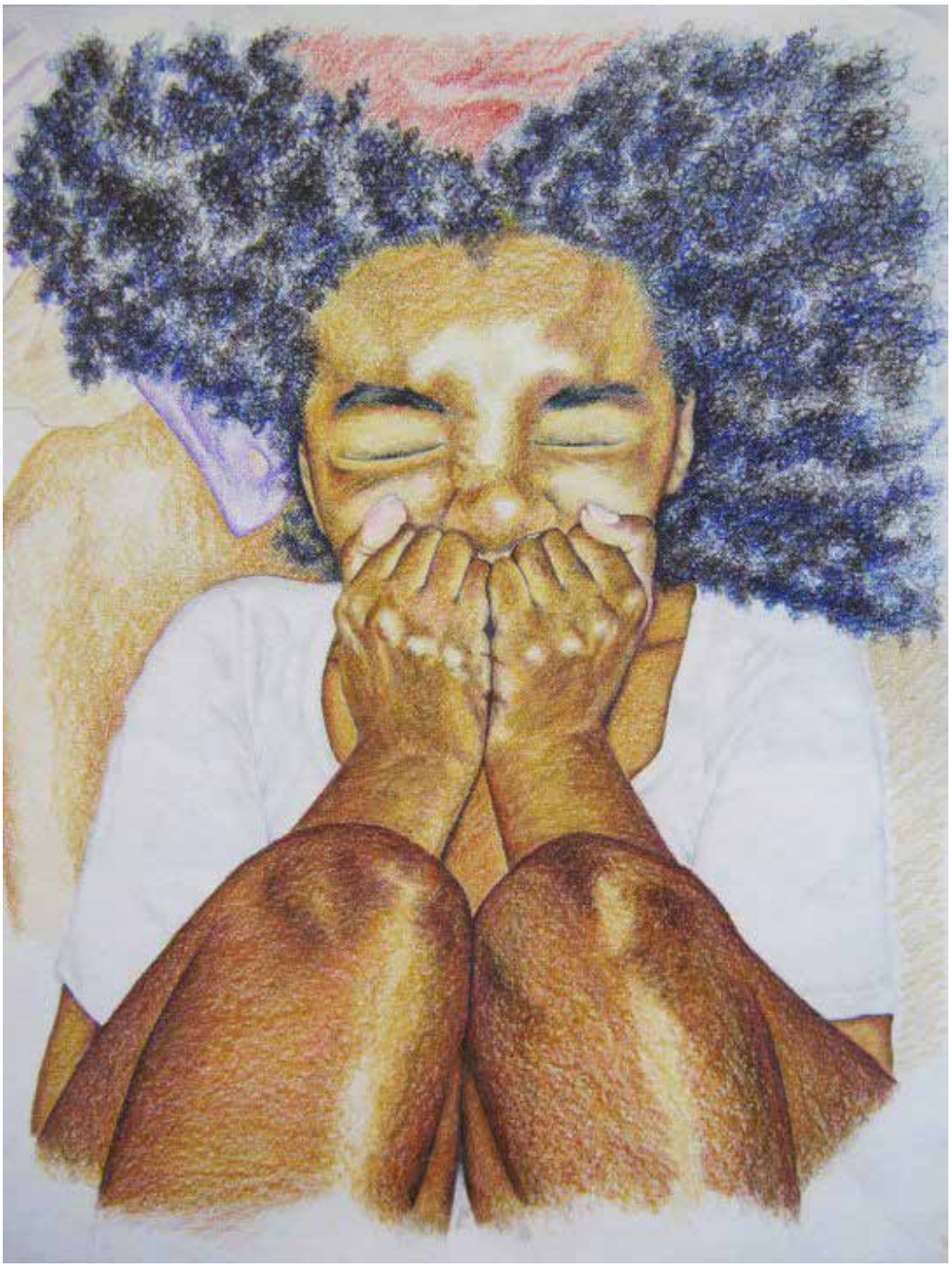
First Prize

The Creation

cedar

Vincent E. Merkel

Scholastic
watercolor
Ngozi Urama



Glowing Object

computer graphics

Imari Narai Sallins

Xiaoping

computer graphics

Skyler Hodell

Hands

color pencil on paper

Kevin Maida

Honorable Mention

Kisses of Rain

photography

Nafia Tagassum

Lourdes, 13 Years Old

color pencil

Olivia de la Pena

Square Lamp

hand painted paper (traditional Korean paper), hard wood frames, glue, metal

Ye Won Kim

Advent Colors

Michaela M. Rossi

Trees without a single leaf
Stand out against a sky pure white.
Royal purple, creamy pink,
Alternate on candles bright.
Candy red and piney green
Ornament the tree inside.
Wreaths that hang on every door,
In color schemes that coincide.
Brown and black and gravel grey
Shade the simple manger scene
As humble, tiny figures wait
The birth of all men's King to Be.

Race to National Harbor

Nardha Patricia Ulloa Solorzano

My heart is about to burst out of my chest. The soles of my feet are burning. My muscles are on fire. My lungs are ready to give out. The cold, freezing air feels like blades piercing my throat as I inhale. I wiggle my fingers to return some sensation to them, but it's useless. I can barely feel my hands. All my blood is rushing to my core. It is a cold and rainy October morning. It is still dark outside. The sun refuses to come up, idling in the horizon and teasing us with its weak rays of warmth. I hear the steady, rhythmic pounding of my own two feet against the pavement. There's no music to drown out my labored breathing. One, two, inhale… one, two, exhale. The sound of hundreds of steps striking the ground reverberates and is magnified. I'm glad to know I'm not alone on this quest.

I look at my watch. Time is looking good…

This is the first time ever that I'm attempting to run a half marathon, which is 13.1 miles! My goal is to finish this race in less than 2 hours. My target pace is 8 minutes and 30 seconds per mile. I could shoot for 9 minutes per mile, but I want to push myself. I wrote the times of each mile on my hand to remind myself of my goal as I run. It's difficult to tell your body to keep going when the voice inside your head keeps telling you, "You should stop. You should rest." Running is a physical and mental challenge. Both elements must be up for the task to succeed.

I started to run in local races about two years ago after I graduated high school. I was part of the track and field for six seasons, basically sophomore year up until senior year. I only did one season with the cross country team--a decision that at the time seemed crazy, but I will never regret it. I started running the 100 meter dash in track and field. Who could have thought that years later I would be running a half marathon? As my body built up on endurance, I increased the distance of my races.

I can safely say that my half marathon training started about a year ago. You have to get mentally ready for it. Running

nonstop for two hours or more is not easy. There's a quote that always comes to my mind as I run: "I don't stop when I'm tired; I stop when I'm done." It's like a mantra that keeps me going. I started with races of 5 kilometers, about 3.1 miles. My training would consist of running three to four times a week, around the neighborhood, through trails, on sidewalks, to my old high school, around George Mason University (which is about a 10 minute run from my house). Soon, I was running 10 kilometer races, 6.2 miles. I remember that for a period of three months my time dropped from about 57 minutes in the 10k race to about 50 minutes. It was a huge personal accomplishment for me.

The serious half marathon training started 14 weeks prior to the race date. It would consist of running four to five days a week. On day one, I would go on a short run of about 30 minutes. Day two would be a short run and hill workout. I would go to the park and run full speed up a hill, which was about a 20 second sprint. Day three was the long run. The long run was anything between 60 to 80 minutes. That was meant for endurance. Day four was track workouts, using the track at Mason. The workout involved a series of loops: a 200 meter run, then 400 meter, and 600 meter, then back down, 600 meters, 400 meters, and a 200 meters. I would have about a minute to two minutes of rest in between. I would vary the distance of the loop each week just to keep it fun. Day five was another 30-minute short run to finish up strong for the week.

I notice my clothes are wet. I'm sweating. I feel miserable. My muscles are sore. My arms and feet feel heavy. My chest is heavy. It feels like I'm on a bench press and the bar has fallen directly on top of my diaphragm. I got Gatorade from the volunteer that was handing out the drinks at the last water stop. I took maybe three sips out of it. No time to stop. The 10 kilometer split is coming up. That's 6.2 miles… about halfway through the course. We are running on the George Washington Memorial Parkway toward the Woodrow Wilson Bridge-- hence the name of the race, Woodrow Wilson Bridge Half Marathon. We are running from Alexandria, VA, to National Harbor in Maryland by crossing the bridge.

The race started around 7:00 in the morning at the doorsteps of George Washington's Mount Vernon. Thankfully, I stayed in the Holiday Inn in Alexandria, along with George, a family friend who had also decided to run the race. Staying there meant about 2 hours of extra sleep. We could walk to the shuttle pick-up site from the hotel. My mom was not happy about it. Mom, being the typical overprotective mother, didn't want me to spend the night at a hotel. It took some work but she finally agreed to let me do it my way, under one condition. She told my older sister, Yeni, to accompany me. Yeni wasn't thrilled with the idea, but she came along anyway.

I met George through the youth group at our church, and I have known him for over six years. He's old enough to be my dad, but he has taken a role of a mentor and has helped me through the years with school assignments and personal goals, like this race. One time, when he was living abroad due to an assignment with the Air Force, he sent a letter to the principal of my school. In that letter, George told the principal that he wanted to congratulate me for getting good grades on the AP exams from the previous year. The principal came to my classroom and gave me the letter personally and congratulated me on George's behalf. I was speechless. I felt an enormous gratitude toward George for doing something out of the ordinary and so unexpected for me. To this day, I still have that letter.

As I was getting ready to go to bed the night before the race, I laid out my running outfit on the floor. I had my compression socks, compression running shorts, t-shirt, watch, and shoes. My mom told me to wear layers of clothing. Ha! She most certainly would not approve of my chosen ensemble. The weather forecast said it would be cold and rainy. However, I'd run a 10-miler about a month before the actual half marathon. I tested my running gear and endurance. It was basically a trial run just to see if I could handle the distance and if my running gear would be comfortable enough for such a long distance. I found out that I had the endurance to run the race. I also discovered that layers don't work for long distances. The way I think about it is that the human body is like the engine of a car. If it gets too hot, then it stops.

My shins are bothering me. It's that irritating pain on my shins again. The compression socks help but only a little bit. They keep the pain at bay. I bring my hands down to my sides and shake them. I use this technique to relieve the tension from my shoulders and my arms. At this point, I have left George behind me. He couldn't keep up with my pace. It is understandable; I wasn't expecting him to do so. My quads burn. I feel hot, but the air is cold. People are cheering as we run by. They line the sidewalks. Little kids ringing cowbells. People holding out signs and balloons. I see the 13-mile marker up ahead. It seems so far away. My legs don't respond to my commands: Move faster! My eyes move in and out of focus, to the crowd, the mile marker, the runner up ahead, my watch… 1 hour and 45 and counting. I don't stop when I'm tired; I stop when I'm done. I start to swing my arms with more force. My lungs and muscles are screaming in protest. But I can't slow down. I notice I have a lot of energy left in my tank. Where is that coming from? One, two, inhale... one, two, exhale. Oh, the finish line is in sight.

Calliope 2014 First Prize – Poetry and Prose in Foreign Languages

Tu Amor

Sayda Sarahi Garcia Pineda

Tu amor no esta muerto,
solo esta dormido.
Lo arruyó el tiempo,
lo arropó el destino.

En mis sueños me abraza y juega conmigo,
cual mariposa travieza que burla al olvido.

Despierto y en mi corazón otra vez se queda escondido,
tierno pajarillo que se acurruca en su nido.

No... tu amor no esta muerto,
solo esta dormido.
Lo arruyó el tiempo,
lo arropó el destino.

Translation

Your Love

Sayda Sarahi Garcia Pineda (K.V. White, faculty mentor)

Your love is not dead,
It's merely asleep.
Lulled to sleep by time
Hidden away by destiny.

In my dreams, your love embraces me and teases me
Like a mischievous butterfly that deceives obliviousness.
I wake up and again in my heart your love remains hiding,
like a tender bird that curls up in his nest.

No… Your love is not dead,
It's only asleep.
Lulled to sleep by time
Wrapped up by destiny.

Farewell Mary Delorenzo Knight

Ian Rodgers

I didn't get to know you,
Now I'll never have the chance.

Those who did know your smile,
Your laughter, sadness, hopes and dreams,
Will hold it all together
And bear the sorrow at their seams.

I have hope the people left behind
The family, friends, students and staff,
Shall carry on your memories
And for your sake, learn again to laugh.

Whereever you end up,
Whatever path you take,
Know it will be bright.
For without you down here,
The world has lost a precious light.

I did not get to know you.
Now I'll never have the chance.
So watch over those who did, please,
And guide them on with ease.

Hummingbird

painting

Sayda Sarahi Garcia Pineda

Anatomical Alteration

computer graphics

Gawon Lee

Whimsical Tree House

cotton wood bark

Maryam Keleshame

Dream Bridge

computer graphics

Justin Meldrick Rinonos

Moth Girl

ink on paper

Morgaine Castillo-Amore

Smile

computer graphics

Rafael Arnaud Santos de Sousa

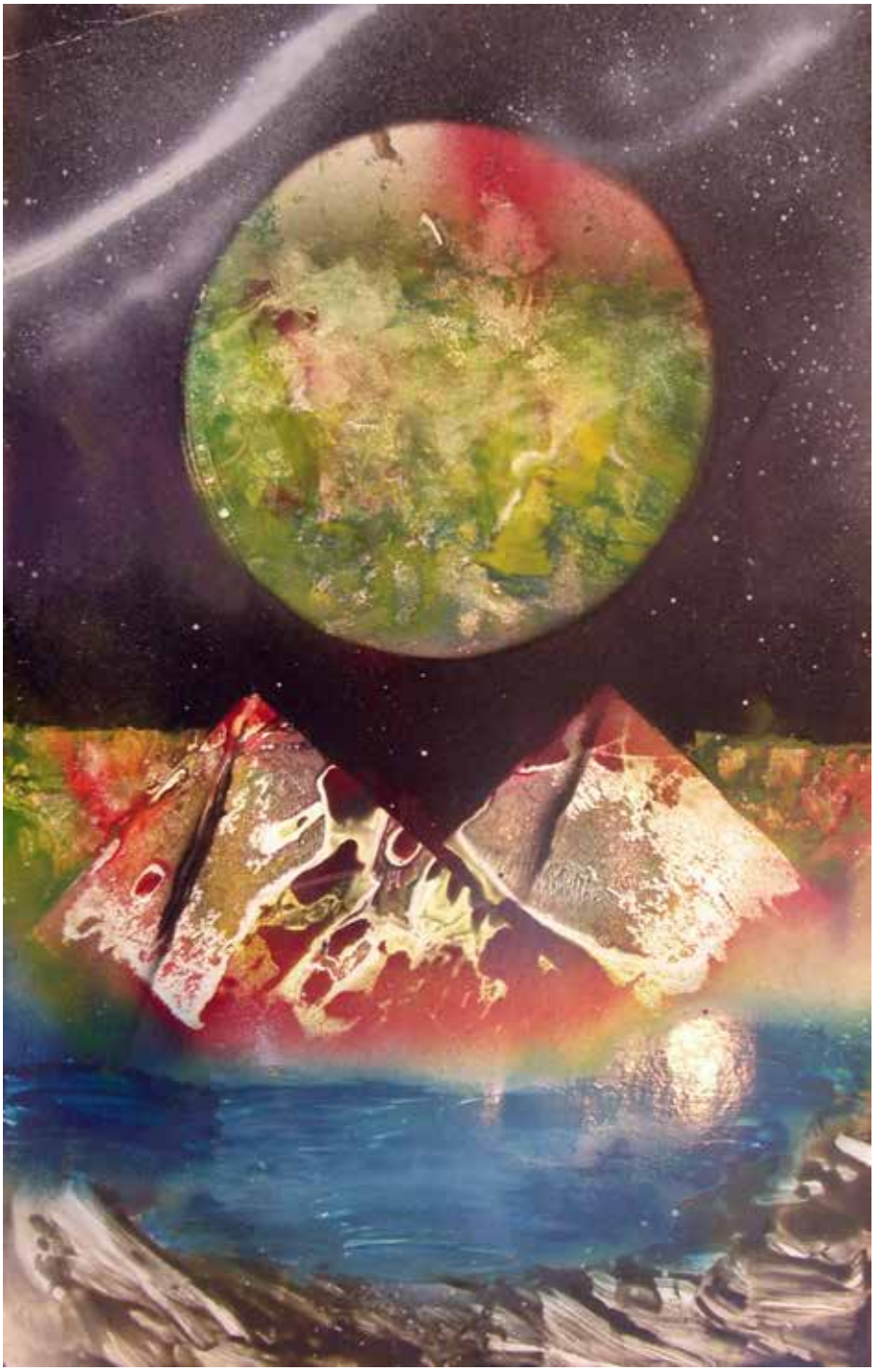
Pumpkin Lamp

hand painted paper (traditional Korean paper), hard wood frames, glue, metal

Ye Won Kim

Twin Pyramids

Michael Hibbard



Calliope 2014 Second Prize - Creative Nonfiction

Genesis

Linda Rayasse

The cafeteria is a jungle safari. I enter and am nauseated by the stench of poorly contrived lunch food. The prattle of sleep deprived students does nothing to ease my discomfort. Scanning for an empty seat, I absorb the usual hustle of the student body. A tribe of baboonish jocks salivate at the sight of their meals to my right. A herd of consonant band prodigies frantically swap homework answers to my left. In the far left corner of my eye, an unfamiliar face nervously chomps on a carrot stick. She gapes at her green salad as if it may spontaneously come to life. I am strangely intrigued by the hopeless girl. Like a gazelle, she is serene. She chews silently in her corner and is vigilant for predators, defensively peeking upwards while calmly remaining in her seat. In her I see myself, once feeling isolated by my differences in unfamiliar territory.

I am five years old and the work of acculturation is defining me. Alexandria, Virginia, is my kangaroo pocket. The local café is colonized by hordes of Mediterranean men who converse over coffee refills and Marlboro Lights. Going to the grocery store on Saturday morning is like entering an international airport: I can hear more foreign languages than English itself. At Glen Forest Elementary, I know my place in the jungle. Although the aroma of lamb and couscous radiates from my body, I am inconspicuous among my peers. Huddled together in the school lobby, we are like the world market. I patiently await the school bus as my parents' thick Algerian accents howling their goodbyes rings in my ears. I become a chameleon harmonized in the crowd.

My camouflage falls away when my family moves and I begin attending a new school. Excitement pulses through my body on my first day. As I stumble through Ms. Peterson's classroom, my heart drops. At the sight of my new classmates, I freeze like a gazelle in the presence of lions at feeding time. Twenty-two pairs of eyes fiercely pick at my untamed black hair, deep skin tone, and tattered Aladdin backpack. I am the antithesis of the room. In my

new habitat, I feel that I am trapped in the Barbie aisle at Toys 'R Us. A glint of mischief permeates through the seemingly angelic smile of each child. I imagine they are conspiring to stamp out my differences and groom me into one of their own. Determined to be myself, I know I will have to learn to live with the lions. I am no longer a chameleon.

It is my first high school varsity lacrosse game. We are a new team. On the other side of the field, two cackling hyenas mock our team's outdated uniforms. The field is flooded with golden ponytails and slender, smooth limbs. It is almost impossible for me to distinguish my teammates from my opponents. As I squint to differentiate the two, a player hurls the ball in my direction. It lands between my opponent and I. The world fades away as I lock myself in the moment. Sweat rolls over the cuts of my legs. The frizzled ball on my head engulfs my face, limiting my peripheral vision. In the distance, my parents' caws travel over the yelps of the crowd. Above the cacophony, I hear the tune of my legacy.

As I munch on my plain turkey sandwich, I reminisce on the length I have come. The girl whom I observe struggled to unseal her carton of chocolate milk and glanced up to see who may be amused with her naiveté. Today is her first day in the jungle safari.

Calliope 2014 Third Prize - ESL

A Secret Piece of Paradise

Patricia Greenlee

Everybody would like a place which feels secure, silent and in contact with Mother Nature. We dream of a perfect place to escape to once in a while and feel as if we are inside of an imaginary time capsule, far away from the real world. I have that place. It is my secret piece of paradise, quiet and peaceful as heaven. It is located in the Caribbean Sea, in the middle of nowhere, as an appendix cay of Eleuthera, Bahamas. Its name is Spanish Wells, a little known island where my husband and I have amazing memories. Three things make Spanish Wells a lovely place to visit: its people, its beach, and its safe environment.

The first thing that makes Spanish Wells interesting is its people. They are happy, friendly and warm toward visitors, in spite of not being used to seeing strangers walking around. They live in a small community where they know each other. Also, religion is very important to them, so they have five different churches on the two-mile-long island. Another characteristic of the people who live there is that they are a society closed to outsiders. They are not open to immigrants. They marry locals and stay in the same community. In general, relocating is not something they seek. Clearly, they enjoy their lives and do not want to change. They are friendly and helpful with strangers if they visit for a short period of time.

Second, Spanish Wells has one beautiful beach that is practically virgin. It is undeveloped, so there are no hotels or restaurants nearby. There are no lifeguards, crowds of people or vendors to distract you from the real beauty of this magical site. It is simply the white sand, the aquamarine water and the blue sky. The beach remains empty during the week because tourism on the island is not significant, and the local population is small. Something good about this is that it helps to keep this paradise perfect. The beach has an amazing marine ecosystem formed of several reefs with multicolored fish, marine flora, and coral. It is a perfect spot for activities such as diving, snorkeling, kayaking, and fly fishing.

Without doubt, it is the place where tourists and local people find diversion. The majestic beach of Spanish Wells makes this small island a great place for a vacation.

The safe environment is another important reason to visit Spanish Wells. The only way to get to the island is by boat. The entire cay has only one ferry that moves people from Eleuthera to Spanish Wells; the rest of the boats belong to the locals as private transportation. This makes the island inaccessible for many people. In addition, there are no commercial businesses that promote social or nocturnal life such as bars, discos, liquor stores, movie theaters, restaurants or malls. Usually, the two grocery stores, the five churches, and the beach are the spots where locals meet. Life in Spanish Wells is calm, which is important for visitors who prefer a safe location to take a restful vacation.

Spanish Wells is an interesting place to visit due to its friendly people, attractive beach and secure environment. You should consider this location if you are looking for a relaxing vacation. However, remember to leave everything exactly as it was when you arrived. In that way, it will be forever a secret piece of paradise.

Dancing

Jeannine C. Rossi

Falling, falling, they fall hard,
And sweep like blood across the gravel,
Tearing down what was set in stone,
Keeping the traveler from his travels.

The upturned stones are the only sign of their passing,
But the heavens are at bliss with their absence.
Yet the earth is spinning, so soon they'll return,
Not to raze, but to dance.

Rising, rising, they have risen,
And our Mother dons her white veil.
For the creatures are hiding, hiding,
As the earth waits, grey and pale.

Slowly, softly, gently now they fall again,
Not in an orderly way; each with her own fancying.
They breathe to the crocuses - "Not yet, but soon,"
As the snowflakes come down dancing.

1950s

Huseyin Kaygusuz

Cuba turns into the first commies of the west,
While Fidel Castro has no regrets when he is at his “best”
Defeating the present day president,
By leading the way with a conquest that was so evident.
Irrelevant signs of a cold war,
Where the US and USSR “get along” no more,
Based off of the memories from the old war
Which made both of the countries’ folks sore

Rock and Roll came along
Where Elvis Presley became a phenomenon.
Teens sang along to all of his hits
Young girls went wild by his style of twisting his hips.
Hit singles like “Johnny B. Goode” took,
The radio waves that overlooked
Every part of the country
Where the black and white audiences were listening comfortably

Yet, they could do more than listen with a TV set
Watch James Dean rebel without a cause against the law with much success
Which was in 1955 the same year he died
When he went out for a drive that he could not survive.
By this time Playboy magazines had been around
Then Disneyland opened its doors for the American crowd
Now Brando is propelled onto the big screen
With a part in A Street Car Named Desire by Kowalski
Of course it would be, wrong to forget the sex symbol
Ms. Marilyn Monroe who also gained prominence in the 50s
Oh yeah! There was also that show I Love Lucy

Scientific and technological advancements were made,
With Mr. Crick and Mr. Watson discovering the DNA

Then the development of FORTRAN,
A very important program, made by IBM
Sputnik 1 by the Soviets and Explorer 1 by the USA,
Started what was called the “space race”
In 1958, thanks to Eisenhower NASA was established,
And its predecessor NACA thus vanished

Back to more fun topics,
Did you know in the 1950s more and more read comics?
Even though the government censored it and tried to stop it
It only became the Silver Age of comics so they could not knock it.
Then the Frisbees, Hula Hoops and Barbie started being made
Which are still toys that are being used today
Man, the 1950s was some decade

Fake Sugar

Arielle Winkler

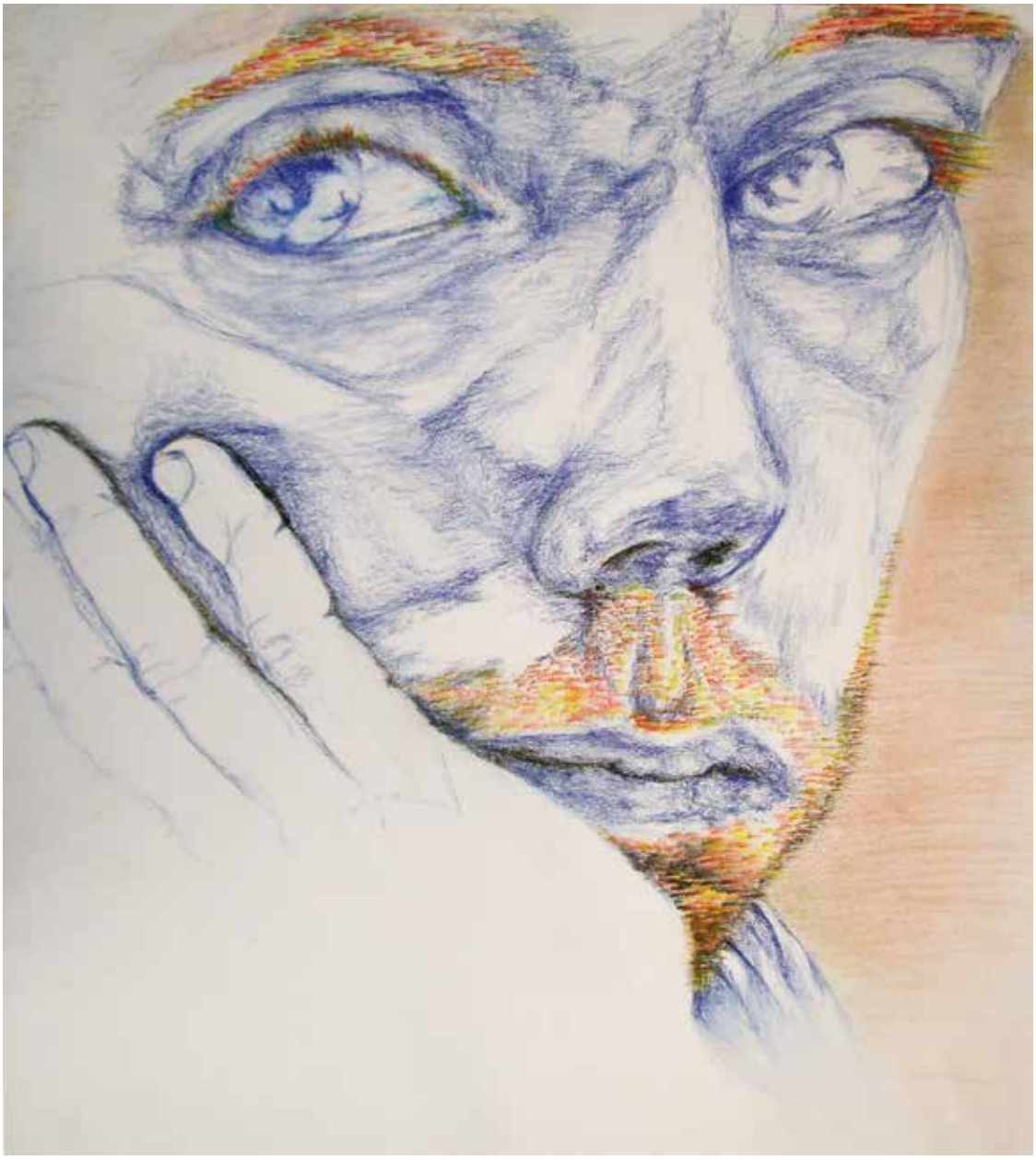
his pain is sickly sweet
the lies I tell myself
coat my tongue
in granulated crystals
that melt but
leave a nauseating film
crawling over my taste buds
my stomach
folds in on itself
twists, turns, churns
if I shut my eyes too tight
I can feel the rush of blood
the shame
and I lose myself
just a little
in what I want so desperately
to be true

Honorable Mention

Portrait in Blue

pastel and pencil on paper

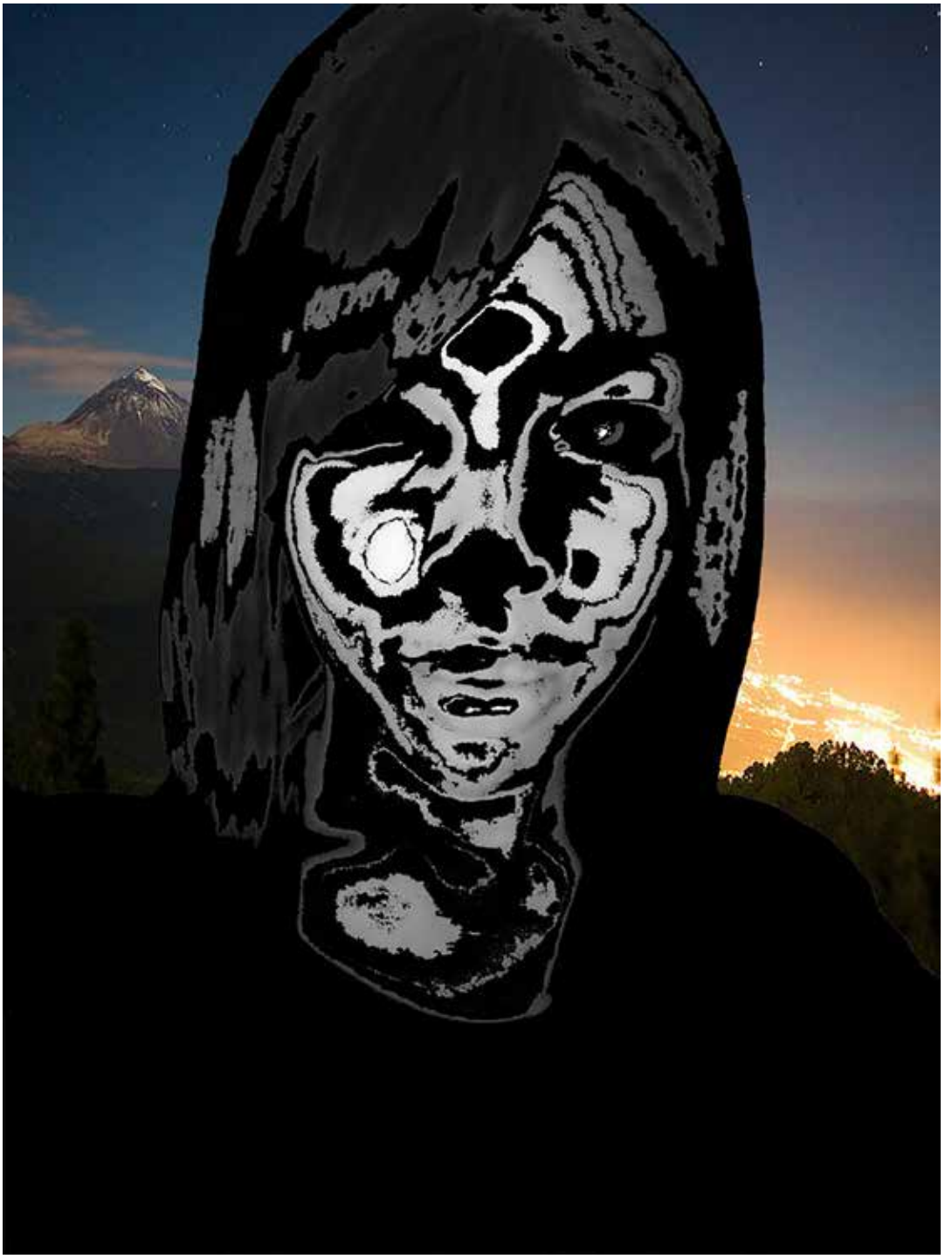
Ryan Houseman



Self Portrait

computer graphics

Imari Narai Sallins



Cubistic Figure

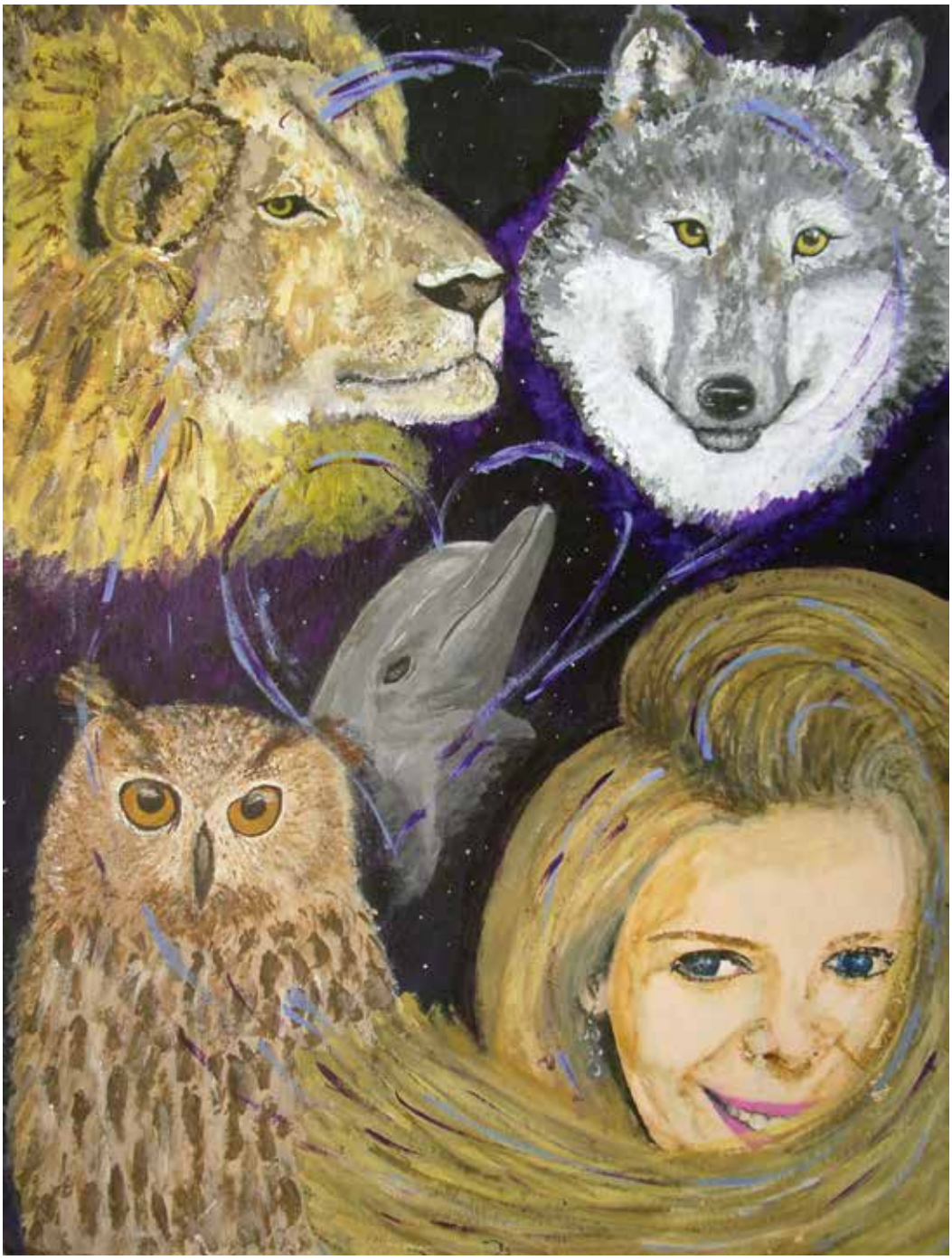
color pencil

Nicaela Omaraye Gilmore

A Whole in the World

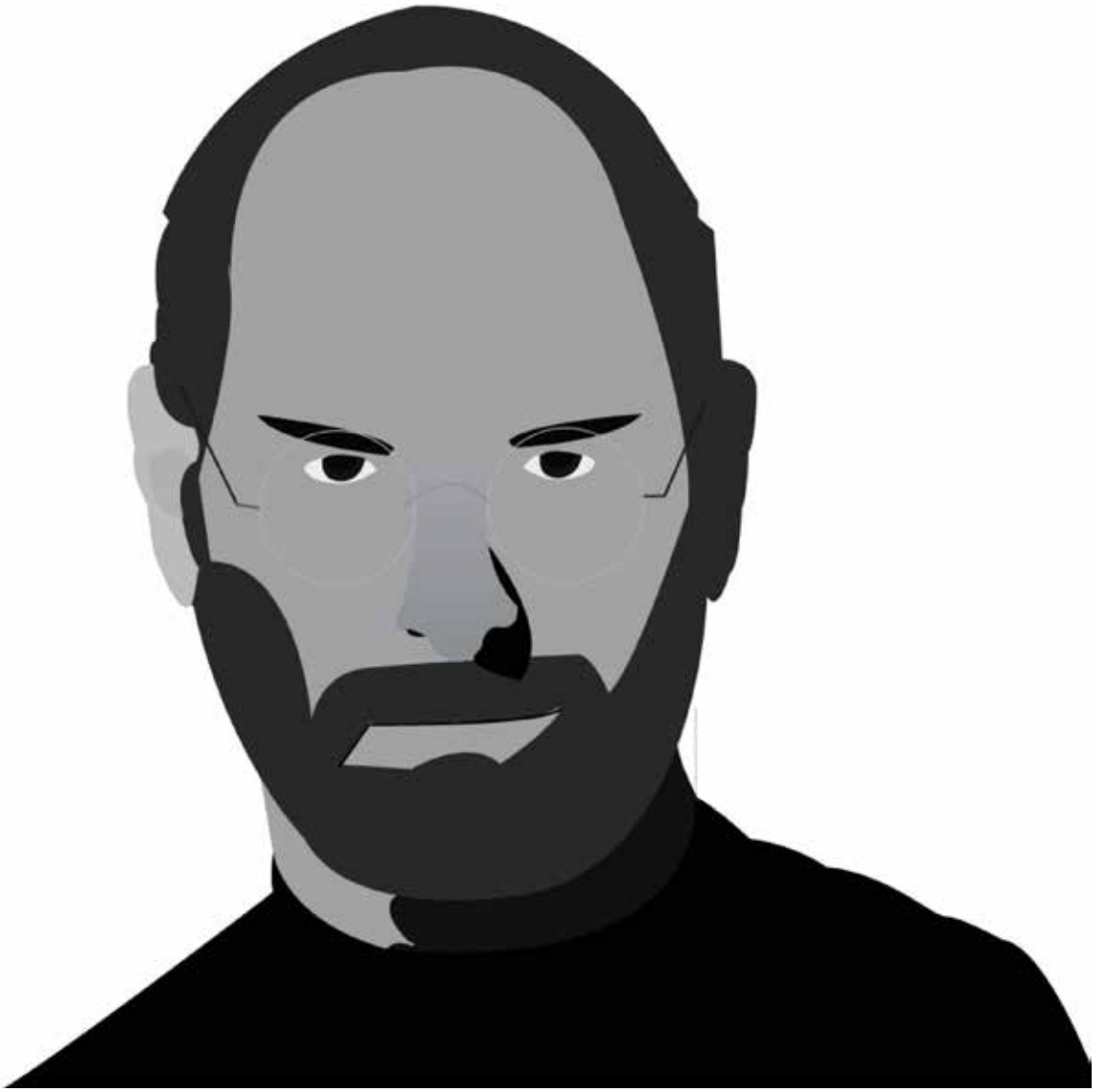
acrylic on board

Priscilla Pittington



Untitled

Robert Henry Quinn



Caius

computer graphics

Skyler Hodell

Ned Russin

pencil on paper

Gabriela Contreras

Cloud in a Face

computer graphics

Huong Quynh Nguyen Vu

Calliope 2014 Third Prize - Poetry

Humans

Kathleen Wilkie

Death
Incubators of
The oncoming fate
Death awaits all men
Is life just wasted time?
There is no legacy or purpose
Never enough time, marching with our dirge
But we found greater purpose in life.
And when we lived, we loved,
Our care brought others joy
Our works lived on
It was good
We smiled
Life

Mariposa

Sayda Sarahi Garcia Pineda

Frágil y liviana eres mariposa,
gotas de color impregnarón tus alas.
Volar en el jardín es tarea pesada,
el viento es frío e intimidador,
la noche oscura y larga.

Derrepente una tarde la lluvia baja,
el agua empapa tus alas,
no soportas la carga;
y caes al suelo.
Alli inmovil y aterrada te quedas en silencio
y desmayas.

La tempestad pasa.
Despiertas,
tu corazón agitado late a mil por hora,
temerosa extiendes tus alas
aliviada las descubres completas,
listas para volar de vuelta.

Translation

Butterfly

Sayda Sarahi Garcia Pineda (K.V. White, faculty mentor)

Butterfly, you are fragile and light.
Drops of color impregnated your wings.
Flying in the garden is a difficult task,
the wind is cold and intimidating.
The night is dark and long.

Suddenly, the rain comes in the evening.
The water soaks your wings,
and they cannot stand the load.
You fall to the ground.
Immobilized and scared, you remain silent
and faint.

Calliope 2014 Second Prize - Fiction

The Fighting Cocker Spaniels

Troy Christopher Holmes

The political season at Richard M. Nixon Elementary has drawn to a close with much excitement, and I have emerged victorious. It all started about a month ago, when our teacher came up with a sweet new project. It was almost as cool as our last project, when we got to pick our class mascot. We chose The Fighting Cocker Spaniels. We named our mascot after Nixon's beloved dog, Checkers. We all had a lot of fun with that project, and this new project was going to be just as awesome. Our teacher decided to hold a class election to see who the class president of our third grade class was going to be. She wanted to teach us how real elections worked and how fun politics could be. She wasn't wrong. It was totally fun. However, it was a hard fought victory and I give most of the credit to my daddy, who taught me everything I know about politics. First of all he gave me a sweet political name. My name is Clinton Carter and politics are my game. With a name like that, how can I not be class president? Also right before I decided to run for class president, me and daddy watched all of season one of *House of Cards* on Netflix. Francis Underwood is my hero and I will serve my time in office with his teachings at my disposal.

Now I know what everyone is thinking, how the heck did I pull it off? Especially, how did I do it with the field of great boys and girls running? Well I'll tell you it didn't come easy. I really had to work for it. For example, let's look at Billy Wilder. He was out of the gates faster than anyone of us. I thought he was going to be my biggest competition. After his speech about his homework-to-recess ratio, and how he was going to implement that strategy, I thought I was done for. I mean he was promising that for every hour of homework that is assigned during school, the teacher is required to give thirty minutes of recess to go along with it. Shoot, I would have even voted for him, but then all hell broke loose with the "cooties" controversy. Little Billy didn't stand a chance. A photograph emerged the next day in all of the funny papers in our school newsletter. Billy was caught in the act. He was

caught in the act of holding hands with a first grader. Now, don't even get me started with little Billy having a relationship with a younger girl, but that's beside the point. We all know first graders have cooties. How can we trust a boy that lets cooties into our school? We can't, and little Billy was forced to bow out of the race.

This brings me to my next victim, Timmy Markson. Now Timmy was out of his league from the get go. He did so poorly during the debates that he didn't have a chance. During the entire debate, Timmy was playing Angry Birds. He didn't even look up to answer the questions. I mean he was given soft balls from the moderator. One of his questions was, "Do you think dinosaurs are cool?" I mean come on, how do you not answer yes to that, everyone thinks they're cool. I wish I got that question; I woulda knocked it out of the park. Instead he said that dinosaurs were last year's fad and nobody likes them anymore. Angry Birds messed it up for Timmy. Why does that game have to be so gosh darn fun? Oh well, I won't miss him.

I will miss Suzy. It's a shame what happened to her. She was a great candidate and the smartest girl in class. She got straight A's in every quiz we have ever had. I have no idea how she did it. She dominated in the classroom and then kicked all of our butts in kickball during recess. Suzy had it all. Then the unthinkable happened. It turns out best-in-class Suzy was cheating on the vocab quiz all along. This scandal sent shockwaves through our school and Suzy got detention for a week straight. She swears she didn't do it, but the answer guide was found in her backpack. She was caught red handed. With her serving time, she was forced to bow out of the race, as well. What a shame, maybe she can change her image and run next year for Vice President.

The game of politics at Nixon Elementary is cutthroat and not meant for the faint of heart. With that scandal on everyone's minds we needed a little comedic relief in the race. Thank goodness Doug ran and gave that to us. I don't know why Doug even ran for office. Maybe he wanted it on his middle school applications or maybe his mommy made him run. He gets picked last every single time we play kickball. I even feel sorry for the kid. He seems like a good kid, just a little off. His allergies didn't help

things, either. It's kind of hard to go table by table during lunch to try and get votes when you're allergic to peanuts and you're lactose intolerant. He could only go to the no-peanut tables and wasn't allowed to kick back and have a milk with his future constituents. It's important to the voter to feel as one with the candidate, and when he can't even have a milk with a boy, it's hard to get votes.

With all of those candidates out of the way it was down to just two. It was me, Clinton Carter, against Amy Smith. The "battle of the decade" as everyone was calling it, and it was proving to be a tough battle. Amy was solid on the girls vote. She was also crucial in the band and orchestra vote, as she plays multiple instruments. She plays the clarinet and the violin and is extremely talented in both. Luckily for me, I was able to secure the foreign students vote as I am able to speak a little Spanish. Thank goodness my nanny speaks Spanish, or else the Latino kids would probably have gone with the pretty girl Amy. Also I was able to keep the jock vote as my legs and arms did the talking for that. I am the best in the class in dodgeball and kickball, and I am always either a captain or the first one picked. My skills on the field alone, I think, give me the upper hand. Then the third debate happened. It was the last debate in a contractually obligated agreement and was in a town hall format. The debate was held right before nap time as we all sat down and discussed the issues our school was facing. I was knocking all the questions out of the park as my stance on homework, recess, and the all-important issue of cutters in the lunch line were solid. I was even bold enough to put my foot down on class marriages. I told the students that if our class bunny and our class turtle really love each other, who am I to say they cannot get married. I was fearful that most of the students would think that stance was too strong and that I should have left that issue to after the election, but I couldn't do it. I had to say what I felt. I was glad I did because everyone loved it and soon after the debate a formal marriage between Michelangelo and Hoppers was planned.

We were pretty even in the debate until it was Amy's turn. It seemed like a simple question, but the wording is what messed her up. All she had to say was "what people believe and do in

their own home is their own business." But she didn't say that; she decided to tell people what she really thought, and in front of the entire school she said she still believed in Santa. I mean, really, come on? Santa? We are in the third grade, we can't believe in Santa anymore. That's for little kids. Amy showed the voters who she really is and that's someone who still believes in Santa. I mean we all love presents, and do I know for sure that Santa doesn't exist? No, I don't know, and nobody really knows for certain, but you can't say it out loud because everyone will make fun of you. And that's exactly what everyone did. They laughed her right out of the classroom, and for the next couple of days she called in sick to school. She was officially done, and I was officially the new class president of the Great Fighting Cocker Spaniels.

Like I said earlier, it wasn't easy to win the Presidency. It was a lot of hard work. Do you think all of these scandals happened out of the blue? Just like I saw on television, I had to fix the situation. Did I take the "cooties" picture and send it into the funny papers? Did I give a student all of my Halloween candy to ask Amy if she believed in Santa? Did I rig the vocabulary quiz and place the answer guide in her backpack setting Suzy up to fail? Did I buy Timmy the new Angry Birds and install it on his phone? Politics is not a game you can play clean. As we say here at Richard M. Nixon Elementary, show me the proof and I will answer those questions.

Harrier

Jessica Meyers

He pounced on me as if I were an injured doe.
He was the vicious lion.
He tore inside me with his sardonic claws
He seized my throat with his malevolent teeth,
Making it impossible for me to breathe.

I knew if I'd shown pain or anguish,
He would have crushed my throat with his huge jaws.
So I acted as if it didn't alarm me.

He kept trying to penetrate a little deeper with his claws;
Playing with his food to see if I would squirm and wail for mercy
I wouldn't allow him that.

I brushed it off.
Pretending I didn't know what he was doing. Although inside,
I was thinking, "don't twitch a muscle or you will pique his appetite."

I don't know if he had noticed the fear in my eyes
Or if he was trying to elicit the terror to surface.
Because the only food he'll eat,
Is one that is terrified and weeps for his forbearance.

When I didn't show him indication that I felt affected, he left.
Maybe he got tired of playing with his food.
Maybe it was too much work trying to get this already dead-like animal to squirm.
I guess he couldn't sense on the inside I was that injured doe
His eyes the headlights,
Waiting in apprehension for his teeth to plummet into my body.

He wanted to eat me alive while I cried out.

He wanted to take big chomps of my insides while I struggled to run.
But when I lay motionless,
Knowing he didn't want to eat something that wasn't scared, he walked away.

What he doesn't know is
I'm left here with these open wounds.
They seep at this very moment.
These gashes seem so massive.
How long will it take for these wounds to close?

I know if he decides to threaten me again with his claws and teeth,
I just might show that fear.
It will be the end….

I wouldn't have a chance.

Calliope 2014 First Prize - Fiction

A Lesson Learned

Hannah Glaser

"Do you know where you are, Wicket?" a harsh voice growled at Paul, waking him from his drunken stupor.

A moment passed before he managed to gather his wits, as well as his broken recollections of the night before.

"Yessir," he finally managed to mumble back.

"Do you remember *why* you're here…" Sheriff paused as he inhaled a draft from his hand-rolled cigarette. He breathed, and then dropped his hand, still clutching the smoking fuse, back down to his knee, where he rested his palms as he squatted, face to face with Paul from behind the bars. "…*Wicket*?"

The uneasiness in Paul's gut spread quickly as a pair of blue eyes smiled at him coquettishly in the back of his mind, beckoning him back to the night before. He groaned impulsively and covered his own eyes with a hand that reeked of spilled gin, and, faintly, the tantalizing, yet damning scent of a flowery perfume.

"*Sure* you do, Wicket," Sheriff smiled, an icy grin stretched taught beneath his furiously squinting eyes. He watched Paul a moment longer before adding forebodingly, "Sure, you do."

Paul slid his forefinger down and peeked through the gap. Sheriff was standing, unlocking the door. He bravely ventured to detach another finger from his forehead, then another, and another, until finally the whole hand was removed by sheer force of will. He waited until Sheriff had walked, slowly, with his long, heavy stride, back to his desk before beginning his first attempt to stand. Over the course of two and a half minutes, muscle-by-muscle, Paul Wicket joined him at his desk, cowering in fear in the straight-backed wooden chair set aside for visitors.

Sheriff waited patiently, squashing the remnants of his charred cigarette in the ashtray he kept by his elbow like a child torturing an insect, before preparing another. By the time Paul had quivered to his seat, he had the fresh cigarette poised between his lips.

He struck a match. Paul watched the flame shiver as Sheriff

drew it closer and closer to his mouth, and gulped.

Sheriff easily pulled in a satisfying lungful of smoke and held it there, trapped for the moment within his deep chest. He exhaled the stinging vapor in Paul's direction, his watchful, steely gaze never once faltering from the target.

"Wicket," he finally began, "Did you ever hear about what happened to the last individual who laid a hand on my daughter?"

"No, sir." The barely audible sound of a mouse busily chewing a hole in the corner of the room nearly drowned him out.

"'Course you didn't," Sheriff leaned back in his chair and grinned, "*No one did*."

Paul systematically unwound his vocal cords from around his spine.

"'That so?" he squeaked.

"Indeed it is."

Just over Sheriff's shoulder, through the uncurtained window, Paul could see the sun twinkling brightly in the sky, beaming over the cheerful sight of a sleepy Main Street on Sunday morning. He hungrily gazed at the white clouds that blossomed and roamed so freely in the expanse, and the empty street, just out of reach, that led away past the painted shop fronts toward a horizon of tall Sierra mountains jutting infinitely upwards. At the sound of a small *click* by Sheriff's seated waist, his heart clattered into his boots.

He tried hard to focus on the idyllic image presented him by the window, fixing his eyes fast on the far-off peaks. He heard Sheriff place something heavy on the top of the desk with a thud, something metallic and mechanical, but he couldn't bring himself to look down until he was sternly instructed to do so. When he did, he could have sworn he felt the nails being driven into the lid of his coffin.

There, inches away, enveloped in the gloom of Sheriff's shadow, lay a gun.

"There we go, Wicket. That's better. Now, lemme tell you 'bout this here revolver of mine…." Sheriff reverently lifted the device with one hand and squinted down the barrel as he aimed it at the oblivious mouse in the corner.

"I can't tell you how much I love this gun. Colt 1851 Navy, .36 caliber. Light as a feather. Leaves a hole so neat and pretty, you'd

need a doctor just to tell you you'd even been shot." He smiled to himself, the way a father would to his child, placing the terrible beauty back onto the desk with eyes full of admiration. "Some folks nowadays might look down on an old ball-and-cap style firearm like this, but me? Oh, no. You ask me, nothing tops this beauty for sheer elegance and reliability."

Paul's soul was long gone by now, and he clung for dear life to the window that teased him so cruelly with the promise of a world outside. He didn't hear Sheriff's voice anymore, only the pulsing of the blood in his ears and the rhythmic chewing of an industrious mouse somewhere, miles away.

Sheriff went on, "But as much as I love this here Navy of mine, sometimes I'll admit, she don't exactly pack the wallop I need. Now, in those cases…." He reached into the drawer on the opposite side of the desk and drew out a second, heftier handgun, and placed it next to its sibling in front of Paul.

"Do you know what this one is called, Wicket?" He didn't bother to wait for a reply, knowing that his words had been addressed to the abandoned shell of a man. "This here is a Smith & Wesson Model 3 Schofield revolver, .45 caliber. Hoo, lemme tell you, you wouldn't want to see the chunk of a man this old friend of mine can carve out."

Paul's eyes were glazed, staring off into the space beyond. He dreamed of his misspent youth and all the Sundays he now wished he'd spent praying in church rather than learning to do the things that had landed him here.

"Now, I'm not sure exactly what it would take to stop a bullet as big as he's loaded with from puttin' half a man's insides on his outside. I don't think a rocky canyon wall'd be enough to hide behind." Sheriff leaned forward, his eyes digging into Paul's, despite their detached, averted gaze. "I *don't think the entire Earth would be enough to hide behind*."

Paul continued to stare out the window. Sheriff was undeterred.

"Now, let's say I had some qualms with some villainous individual. How do you propose I should go about *dealing* with that individual?" He took the Colt up again and inspected it playfully. "Well,

depends on a few things. See, I choose this here gun to get my point made without causing an uproar. I point, and I aim, and with this fella', I never miss. This here is the gun I use on a man that I respect. Wouldn't feel a thing.

"But my Schofield, oh, now…." He swapped pistols, oblivious to the world around him as he found himself caught in reverie, "This cannon I keep loaded for the kind of scum I don't think deserve the luxury of one neat little hole. I save this gun for the man I want to send to the Devil in a bucket and a hatbox."

Paul began to grow very still. Sheriff observed this with satisfaction, placed the gun down, and went on gravely, driving his point home.

"*I save this gun for the kind of man I catch touching my daughter*. Do you understand me, Wicket? …Wicket?"

Silence was the only reply. Sheriff was disappointed. He'd gone too far; he'd broken him. He lingered, pausing with his hands on his knees. He leaned over the two powerful tools of destruction displayed on his desk, scrutinizing his victim, waiting for the satisfying signs of a man scared straight to manifest.

Paul's face, at first, remained blank. Then in a flash, his eyes, still fixed on the window, regained their focus. Before Sheriff could so much as gasp, Paul had leapt up, slapped the Colt onto the floor, grasped the Schofield, and raised it, pointed towards him.
"Wicket, no-!" Sheriff screamed as the barrel exploded, shattering the glass in the window.

To this day, if you ever ask Paul Wicket what happened next, he'll tell you that there are three things he swears on the Bible to be true: First of all, he hadn't a clue who the man with the rifle outside the window had been, and secondly, he'll insist, he'd staunchly refused every dollar of the reward, only relenting when the town *insisted* he do so.

"And finally," he'll say with a smile, "The chicken and dumplings I had for dinner that evening at Sheriff's house by Sheriff's daughter's side was the most delicious meal that I have ever eaten in my entire life! Still, it wasn't half so good as what I had for dessert."

Calliope 2014 Honorable Mention - Poetry

Spiteful Hope

Arielle Winkler

I hope you realize
you made a mistake
and I hope it happens
years from now
when I shed the skin
that you once touched and
left your fingerprints on
when this heart of mine
is no longer weighed down
by memories of you
I hope you know it's too late
but you come anyway
and feel the shattering despair
of losing something you can never get back

Calliope 2014 First Prize - Poetry

Onions

Anjelika Gascon

A dream that lingers within my thinnest veins
underneath the layers of this transparent skin:

she stared at her half naked self in front of the mirror,
while I stood at the alcove watching

I followed her as she slipped out to the balcony
holding an onion and a knife

she sliced the onion in half
placed the other half and the knife on the corbel

she scraped the slice of onion
        from the nape of her neck
                down to the side of her waist

in an instant there she was
thin fingers laced around my neck

fright took sounds of pounding fists
against the gateway of her greed

my body lay like giant stone on a seabed
trapped in the void
of her imperishable discontent

Calliope 2014 First Prize - ESL

Nandi Temple

Abdurrahamn Ishtiaq Ahamd Khan

In my life period I have visited many countries. Every country that I have visited is unique. Of these countries, India is the most exciting country I have ever visited. It is special for me because it has a wonderful combination of nature and culture. In addition, it has an enormous religious background. When I was in India, I visited many temples. The most attractive one was the one in south India, and it is called Nandi temple. The reasons that it allured me were the way that they built the temple and sculptured idols, the people who serve the temple, and the rules that you have to follow in and outside of the temple.

First, Nandi temple attracts a huge number of tourists from all over the world because of its outside appearance, the sculptured idols, and the special places for animals. A tremendous number of Indian people sit in front of the gate and sell flowers and small idols. A huge gate at the entrance is colored beautiful dark maroon and light yellow. The path which takes you to the idols is another story. An abundant number of roses and jasmine everywhere make the atmosphere smell wonderful. The holy room is surrounded by fourteen very tall columns colored with light colors such as bright green, yellow, and pink. When you enter the holy room, you will face three very large idols made of ten tons of pure gold. Furthermore, every idol functions differently. For instance, "Agara" is half human and half cat controls the sun and the moon; "Ram" is the God of good; and "Laho" provides people with money and food. When you leave the holy room, you will wonder about the little barns which are distributed efficiently in every corner of the temple. The reason behind these barns is that they believe that animals are angels, and their mission is to feed and protect them.

Second, the people who serve the Nandi temple are extraordinary people because of their appearance, their food, and their daily life. The people who serve the temple do not wear regular clothes. They have only an orange robe wrapped around their bodies. However, monks must wear red to distinguish themselves from

the normal servants because they are more devoted to the idols. Moreover, they all have to be bald because they believe that being with hair in the presence of their god is disrespectful for the sacred divine. They also believe that in order to raise their spirituality they must avoid eating any meat or chicken. In particular, they have to be vegetarians because monks say that if you cannot give a life, do not take a life. The servants have to follow a certain daily routine every day. The routine could be changed anytime by the monks depending on the circumstances. For example, normally they wake up at 4:00 A.M. to clean up the garden, feed the animals, and prepare the sacred room for worshipper and visitors. However, just in case of inclement weather they have to follow the monks' orders to cover the temple's surface, and get the animals inside their barns, so they will be ready to face strong wind and heavy rain.

Finally, Nandi temple has certain rules that you have to follow to show respect to Buddhism. Before getting inside the sacred room, you have to take off your shoes and put them in special places outside. There are little taps next to the sacred room to help you clean your feet to maintain the cleanliness of holy room. After getting inside, you must keep silent, and you have to pick one of the pillows there to sit on it. You are not allowed to turn your back to the idols because it is considered disrespectful. There is a donation box next to each idol. You have to donate at least one Rupee to help the temple and its servants. Moreover, you are not allowed to leave the temple before getting a small gift from the monks who sit at the exit, and the gift will be either a "lddoo," an Indian sweet, or a small idol.

In conclusion, visiting India is one of the most exciting experiences I have ever undertaken because of the unique architectural designs of the temples, the terrific obedience of the servants, and of course the strict rules in Nandi temple. I believe that the only way to build a peaceful world is by dialogue and understanding the perspectives of other religions. And also the best way to attain that is to travel and discover for you. If I have another chance to travel and explore another religion, I plan to visit the Vatican City, and learn more about the Vatican church and its people and religion.

Calliope 2014 Third Prize - Creative Nonfiction

A Life from Before

Josephine M. Harler

I hadn't been back to my hometown of Charleston since we'd packed up and left when I turned 12. I left behind friends and family whom I knew I'd miss dearly. We had a three-story house that we put up for rent, leaving the top story locked up and not for use. My parents, twin brother, and I were moving onto a sailboat. We were leaving the life on land behind and heading out for adventures on the sea. Except for me, we stocked up the boat and set sail with hardly a look back. I watched the town I loved slowly disappear over the horizon.

Four years later I'm about to turn 16 and I'm back. I'm so excited to see all of my friends and my favorite great-aunt. As we sail into the Charleston harbor, I search for the yacht club on the water's edge that I spent many of my Saturdays at when I was younger. The light is fading and as we approach the yacht club, I can't contain my excitement. As soon as the anchor is in the water we launch the dinghy and head to shore.

The doors of the building are smaller than I remember. The windows are less shiny. The swing set is tiny and I can't imagine how my feet hadn't been able to touch the ground. The only thing that seems to look the way I remember it is the old, black-painted anchor that sits alone, big and majestic, on the grass. It sits there proudly and I walk over to touch it, but it shrinks as I approach. How could this happen? My brother and I used to have contests to see who could clamber to the top the fastest.

The next day my great-aunt came to see us. I remembered her as an energetic little woman with sparkling eyes and beautiful short brown hair. She gave the best hugs. She drives up and gets out of her car and I'm struck dumb. Her hair is grey. She's slouched over and there's a hump in her back. She seems frail and I hug her as softly as I can for fear of breaking her. The sparkle is still in her eyes, but it seems less bright somehow, as if the batteries keeping them shining were slowly dying out. I try not to let it disturb me. Surely if I look away and then look back the woman from four

years ago will be standing in her place.

I'm thrilled to see the two girls who had been my closest friends growing up. Haley had been a small 10-year-old girl who was shy and always hid behind me at parties. She walks towards me and I hardly recognize her. Now she's a tall, elegant teenager with all the confidence in the world. Her smile lights up the room.

Juliette had been an energetic artsy girl who always had a smile tugging at her lips. I expected to see that girl still smiling, hair blowing in the wind. She's gone. The smile is still there, but it looks almost fake. Her eyes are sunken in with dark rings around them and she has a sore on her lip from constantly smoking cigarettes. Her hair is cut short and she looks lost, like someone left her behind and no one came back to find her. It hurts me deeply because I feel like I'm the one who left and never came back. I did that to her. What kind of friend am I?

I'm hoping my childhood home is the same as I remembered it. I loved my house. It was big, yellow, and had a beautiful backyard. We're on our way to get some things out of storage from the top floor and I can't wait to walk in the front door. Only, we get there and the front door is locked, and we don't have a key. I look through the window and the furniture is all wrong. This isn't my home. The yellow paint is fading and vines are climbing up the porch stairs. There's a "Beware of Dog" sign on the fence. A dog? I never had a dog. I'm too afraid to open the gate to see what has become of my beautiful backyard that was full of wildflowers and bright green grass.

My mom opens the side door that leads to the upstairs. As I walk up them, the stairs seem to creak more than usual. There's dust everywhere and stacks of boxes are leaning to the side. I feel like a stranger who walked into the wrong house. I half expect some old lady to walk out and ask me what I'm doing there. If she asked, I wouldn't know what to say.

The Church of the Holy Mackerel

Livia Langley

Once upon a time, there was a fisherman named Peter who always fished at the stream behind his house. He was a very successful fisherman, and when other people couldn't catch or afford food, they would always go to Peter, as he sold some of his catch for dirt cheap. Now, one day, when Peter was fishing, he caught a mackerel that had a white splotch that looked like a cross on its belly.

"This must be a sign from God!" Peter exclaimed. "But… what is God trying to tell me..?" Peter sat there for five minutes before he found the answer to his question. "I get it! This fish has a cross on its stomach, and since a cross is a holy symbol from God, this fish must be blessed by God! Or, maybe this is a sign from God that means that all fish are holy and we shouldn't eat them! Oh, this is wonderful news!"

Peter ran to the church to tell everyone of the sign, and everyone believed him, as such a nice man wouldn't lie to anyone. Thus, the whole village gave up fish, and Peter started The Church of The Holy Mackerel and lived off the donations people gave him. This went on for two months before a traveler came to the village. The traveler was a small woman on a motorbike, and when she came, the townspeople tried to convert her to the church by telling her what Peter had seen and puzzled out. When she heard this though, she began to laugh.

"Why are you laughing? Do you like mocking people's beliefs?!" They shouted.

"Not really." The woman replied, quickly trying to stop laughing. "But there's a hole in Peter's theory, and I should inform him of it."

"A hole in the theory? Really? But Peter was always so kind!"

"He may be kind, but that doesn't change the fact that he may have misinterpreted something."

"Well, let us follow you then, so that we can know how his

theory is wrong."

"Fine by me." The people followed the traveler as she walked to Peter's church and asked to speak with him.

"Sure! What do you want to talk about?" Peter asked.

"Peter, you say you found a fish with a cross on its stomach?"

"Yup!"

"And you interpreted this as a sign that all fish are holy and shouldn't be eaten, right?"

"Yes..."

"Well, if that's true, then aren't you and all the other fishermen here against God? You killed, sold, and ate fish in the past." The people in the church gasped in horror, for she was right. If fish were holy, then the fishermen who had killed them in the past were sinners that deserved to be punished, not made martyrs—especially Peter, who had been a successful fisherman and tempted people to sin by offering his catch for very cheap prices. What they thought of as blessing before, the villagers now thought of as evil, the Devil's work.

"Kill Peter, and all the other fishermen!" cried one woman, and the mob rushed at their former leader. Though Peter screamed for them to stop and held up his hands, they did not listen, and trampled over the man, killing him. At the sight of the carnage, the woman simply laughed, quickly walked out, and left the village on her bike before the mob was able to bring out Peter's corpse and thank the woman for pulling the wool out from under their eyes. However, while the villagers were curious as to why she had left so quickly, they never forgot what she said, and Peter's body was dumped in the river so that the fish he sinned against could have a chance to get their revenge. The fate of the other former fishermen was the same-they would be quickly hung and thrown in the river by the hysterical majority of the townsfolk. Eventually, everyone who had once fished for a living in the village was dead, and Peter's revised religion lived on.

However, there was a small, secret religious group in the village that held meetings at night. They had not stopped thinking about the odd woman who had spouted the words that had got-

ten kind Peter killed. In their eyes, she was the Devil in disguise who had laughed at the violence and at the chance to turn the once-peaceful religion into a crazed, violent one. However, no matter how many meetings they held or theories they cooked up, they never could prove their beliefs or find the strange traveler who had shooken up the village that believed fish were holy.

Calliope 2014 Contributors

Luis Angel Caycho is an International Relations Major, who will transfer to George Mason University to pursue a Bachelor Degree in Government and International Politics. He came to the United States twelve years ago from Lima, Peru. He loves to share his writing with friends and family.

Sayda Sarahi Garcia Pineda is from Honduras. She is a General Studies student at NOVA. She is very enthusiastic about the opportunity to share her poems in *Calliope*. Writing is important for Sayda because it allows her to express her feelings. Sayda's hobbies include painting and writing poems.

Anjelika Gascon is in her last semester at NOVA. She was born in the Philippines, moved to Brazil when she was eight and moved to Canada when she was twelve. Along with her family, she moved to Virginia four years ago and she plans to continue her undergraduate studies here, where she intends to major in Japanese Language and Literature.

Hannah Glaser is a NOVA student who has chosen to pursue a science degree. She likes playing with dangerous lab equipment and corrosive chemicals. She is very grateful to her brother, Ben, for his invaluable assistance in the research behind her story, and for his fortuitous midnight pizza cravings.

Patricia Greenlee is currently taking the last level of ESL at the NOVA Annandale campus. She moved to the United States from Colombia two years ago. Her future plans include enrolling in the Dental Hygienist program at NOVA. She likes animals, gardening, travel and working out. She is discovering her passion for reading and writing in English.

Josephine M. Harler is a first-year student. She is an aspiring artist and plans to transfer to either SCAD (Savannah College of Art and Design) or VCU to major in animation. She lived for many years on a boat and was home schooled. This is her first published work. Her hobbies include origami and watercolor painting.

Katherine Herbst is a second year student at NOVA Annandale and the founder and president of the NOVA Aspiring Writers' Association. She has always had a passion for the English language, and greatly appreciates the opportunity to contribute her original works to *Calliope.*

Skyler Hodell is a second-year biology student getting ready to transfer to the College of William & Mary in fall 2014. This is his first submission to any publication. Although his ultimate career goal is to become a zoologist, he has a passion for the fine arts and hopes to continue making art in the future.

Troy Christopher Holmes, author of "The Fighting Cocker Spaniels" was born on January 31, 1985 in Honolulu, Hawaii. He now lives in Fairfax, Virginia, as he plugs away to get his degree in English and Creative Writing.

Ryan Houseman is a Computer Engineering major. Despite spending much of his childhood drawing and painting, when he took his first art class at NOVA last year, it had been ten years since he had drawn anything. Returning to drawing has been a very welcome and beneficial part of his studies.

Huseyin Kaygusuz is a second-year student at NOVA. He is a liberal arts major and plans on transferring to George Mason University to get an English degree. He enjoys writing, playing soccer and cooking.

Maryam Keleshame is a Business Administration student. She is an Iranian and loves woodworking and crafting. She is a first-year student who will transfer to George Mason University. She is also

an aspiring artist and nature lover. A member of Northern Virginia Wood Carvers, she has participated in many group exhibitions in Virginia and North Carolina. She is happy to know that people may read and gain inspiration from her work.

Abdurrahamn Ishtiaq Ahamd Khan was born in Turkey and grew up in Saudi Arabia. He plans to be a civil engineer. He reads a lot so as to improve his writing skills. In addition, he likes to travel to write what he experiences around the world.

Ye Won Kim is from Korea. She is a balloon artist and she has practiced Korean paper art craft since she was fourteen. Her plan for the near future is to transfer to George Mason University's nursing program. Her dream is to eventually become a nurse and she enjoys sharing her talents with people.

Livia Langley is an aspiring author who grew up surrounded by books and has spent most of her life scribbling down one story or another. This is her first time publishing any of her pieces, but she's always happy to see other people enjoying her creations and stories in general.

Kevin Maida graduated from Lake Braddock Secondary School with an advanced diploma. He is finishing his 2-year program at Nova and will transfer to George Mason University. He plans to begin the Computer Game Design program this fall. The published artwork is his first publication of any type of work. Kevin's hobbies include drawing, digital painting, video games, and soccer.

Vincent E. Merkel has taught Color Theory and Design and the Fundamentals of Sculpture from his studio and for Ziridis private schools in Athens, Greece. His works have been published internationally. He is working towards an Associate Degree that will matriculate to George Mason University for a Bachelor Degree in Visual Technologies.

Jessica Meyers grew up in southeastern Oklahoma and is of Native American decent. She is a science major at NOVA and plans on continuing her education to obtain a Master Degree in Bio-Neurology. She is fascinated with how the brain works and also has a passion for reading and writing.

Priscilla Pittington is a first-year student who plans to major in Communication Design in hopes of becoming a creative director in game design. Priscilla has always loved writing and art and she is currently writing poems, scripts, novels and even songs. Her other hobbies include games design and fashion design.

Linda Rayasse is a Liberal Arts major at NOVA. She hopes to gain admittance into a program to study social work. She is a barista for a coffee roasting company and has traveled to North Africa where the majority of her family resides. She volunteers teaching English in her community and plans to go on many tours teaching abroad in the future.

Justin Meldrick Rinonos is passionate about creating art and skateboarding. He has been doing both since he was in elementary school. Through creating art and skateboarding he has learned many life lessons, like never giving up and always having fun.

Ian Rodgers is a Liberal Arts student. A Northern Virginian who has lived all over the world and uses those sights and experiences in his stories, he writes what is fun, and he loves reading just as much. His future goal is to become a teacher.

Jeannine C. Rossi is a home schooled high school junior, taking Spanish at NOVA for dual enrollment. She teaches chess to elementary school students, and plans a career in accounting. She loves playing piano and oboe, listening to Mozart on the radio, and editing her 250-page novel.

Michaela M. Rossi is a freshman engineering student who took dual enrollment last year, which gave her the opportunity to submit her poem, "Before the Tournament" to *Calliope* in 2013, which was awarded an honorable mention. She is a parishioner at St. Raymond's, and likes sewing dolls with her sisters.

Nardha Patricia Ulloa Solorzano is from El Salvador. She moved to the United States at the age of 12 and was in ESL classes for two years. Nardha is currently a part time student at NOVA and plans to transfer to George Mason University for fall 2014. Her favorite hobbies are running, watching movies, and salsa dancing.

Nafia Tabassum came from Bangladesh and she is a Business Administration major student. This is her second year at NOVA. Her favorite hobby is photography and she spends a lot of time on it. She won 2nd place in the NOVA student art show in 2013.

Nhien Vu An Tran is an international student and a freshman at NOVA. He's studying Science and dreaming of becoming a physician. This is his first time participating in a writing publication. He likes hanging out with his friends and watching TV. He enjoys everything life gives to him and hates being angry.

Robert C. Trexler is a retired human factors scientist who now studies writing at NOVA. His first short story was published in Calliope 2012. A senior student, Robert enjoys classes at NOVA. His hobbies include painting and sculpture.

Ngozi Urama is a Communication Design Major at NOVA, anticipating graduation next fall. She has always loved drawing, painting, and sketching, and now works part time both as an art teacher and a caricature artist. Ngozi also does portrait painting for friends and family.

Kathleen Wilkie is a second year student aiming to transfer to Bridgewater College. She plans to teach English in Japan after earning her degree, and create a nonprofit to donate seeds and garden materials to impoverished city dwellers in the U.S. She has been published in school publications, and served as an organizer for the Word spoken poetry house and an editor for Troubadour literary magazine, which featured two of her works per year of involvement.

Arielle Winkler wants to pursue a career in Criminal Psychology. She's been writing since she was eight, and this is her second publication--Her first was in her high school's literary magazine. Her other hobbies include reading, painting, and playing video games.